The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. XII. BOSTON, SEPTEMBER, 1903. No. 4

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

MONTHLY: 50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents.

Entered at the Boston, Mass., post-office as second-class mail matter, Nov. 14, 1892.

GEO. H. ELLIS CO., PRINTERS, 272 CONGRESS ST., BOSTON.

CONTENTS OF NO. 4.

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY 37
THE GENUINE PRAYER 37
THE STILL HOUR 41
THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB 42
THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL: JUNO'S SCHOOL 44
NATURAL HISTORY: A DAY WITH THE SUNDEWS . 45
AMUSEMENT COLUMN 46
IMPORTANT NOTICES 48

LORD, TEACH US TO PRAY.

Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
Which trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near.

Prayer is the simplest form of speech
That infant lips can try;
Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
The Majesty on high.

Prayer is the Christian's vital breath,
The Christian's native air;
His watchword at the gate of death:
He enters heaven by prayer.

O thou by whom we come to God,—
The Light, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer thyself hast trod,
Lord, teach us how to pray.

—*Montgomery.*

THE GENUINE PRAYER.

"The Lord said to Ananias, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one Saul, of Tarsus; for, behold, he prayeth!"—ACTS ix. 11.

What was there remarkable in this fact? Paul had often prayed before, no doubt, for all religious men, Jews and heathen, prayed; and Paul was zealous in his religion as a Jew. But, perhaps, though he had often before meant to pray, had gone through the form of prayer, now, for the first time in his life, he really prayed in spirit and truth. Let me illustrate this.

There are moments of sudden illumination, in which we see in a new light and feel in another way what we have all our life been hearing and saying For the first time we come in contact with reality. We have been using words: now we see the very things we have been talking about.

He who, for the first time, sees a mountain or sees Niagara, is lifted into another sphere. These grand and lovely forms take possession of his soul. The mountain, in its solemn majesty, exalts his inmost being. He communes with God in the universe. His lips are mute: he does not pray in words, but the sense of God's greatness overflows his mind. The soul rises to heaven, and forgets earth. This is a true prayer, and we may say of one, in such an hour, "Behold, he prayeth!"

The first sight of death affects us in the same way. Some dear friend whom we have always known and loved, with whom we took sweet counsel, who was always ready to sympathize with our feelings, to advise, to warn, to help us, one who entered into the deepest places of our life, lies calm an still before us. We look into that awful mystery, and say,

"Oh that those lips had language! Speak to me, my friend: tell me where you have gone, what you see! Let me comprehend the 'passion of that peace.'" In such an hour we rise out of things seen into those unseen. We forget our low cares and selfish aims. We commune with the realm of spirits beyond time and space. We enter into the presence of the living God, and, though no words come from our lips, we are in the spirit, and it may be said of us, "Behold, he prayeth."

The essential thing in prayer is to feel the presence of the Infinite and Unseen. Whatever takes us up there, out of our finite earthly thoughts, makes us pray. To say our prayers is not to pray Prayer is not the act of the lips, but the condition of the soul.

I suppose that Saul had prayed regularly all his life, at the regular hours of prayer,—the sixth, ninth, twelfth. He had devoted a large portion of his time to saying his prayers according to the approved Pharisaic ritual. But at last the hour came when his whole soul was moved to its centre by the sight of the heavenly face of Jesus. He knew then that his past life had been a mistake. He had been zealous for all legal forms and ceremonies, devoted to the worship of the Temple. He had fasted twice in a week. He had been exceedingly zealous for the traditions of his fathers, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. He thought himself a very religious man: others thought so, too. When he stood by, and looked into the face of Stephen, overflowing with divine peace he knew that he was somehow wrong. But pride and passion and habit made him go on. He continued to persecute the Christians until, on his way to Damascus, the great light shone around him, and the sweet voice spoke to his soul; and now he arose another man, and began to pray for the first time in his life, the prayer of a little child.

The essential thing in prayer is that it shall be real,—not a form, a decency, a ceremony, but a genuine outflow of the finite heart to the infinite heart. For this purpose the genuine prayer must be the prayer of faith, not the prayer of form.

Forms, no doubt, are good and useful. It is very well for a little child to learn to say its prayers. It is well for a church, while in its infancy, to say its prayers. But, then, we must remember always that the prayer of form is only a step in the direction of the genuine prayer. It is not yet the Christian prayer in spirit and truth.

"When ye pray," said Jesus "use no vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye like to them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him." But the Christian Church has forgotten these words of Jesus. The Greek and Roman churches, which compose the largest part of the Christian body, continue to repeat their "Kurie Eleeson," their "Pater Noster," and their "Ave Maria" over and over, hundreds of times a day, as though the repetition of the prayer would make it reach the throne of God.

The Protestant Church has generally, though not always, taken a higher view of prayer. It has believed, with Montgomery, that

> "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
> Uttered or unexpressed;
> The motion of a hidden fire
> Which trembles in the breast."

It is the ascent of the soul to God; it is "the flight of one alone to the Only One."

First of all, then, in prayer is the sense of a divine presence; the consciousness of a divine power, wisdom, and love above all, through all, and in us all. Nature without this all-pervading sense of Deity is cold and dead. Life without it has no sufficient aim and purpose. Sorrow and disappointment without it have no secure consolation. Without it there is no unity in the world, no meaning in existence. Without it science itself would soon lose its interest; for why study the facts and laws of a universe which came from nothing and is going nowhere?

In the Psalms there is this very striking petition, "Unite my heart to fear thy name." The soul needs the unity which comes from devotion to something infinite, perfect, the ideal beauty and goodness of things. This unites the heart and life, and prevents it from being wasted and distracted in the endless variety of nature.

"Those who come to God," says the Epistle to the Hebrews, "must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him." These are the two great elements of prayer,—"to believe that God is, and that he blesses those who dili-

gently seek him." We are to believe in a divine presence, and that it is good for us to draw near to it. So we have work and faith, duty and trust, law and love, labor and rest. While we can work and do our duties easily and well, this brings contentment. We feel the presence of God in nature around, and this is one way to come near to him. When we are weary and heavy-laden, when life is hard, when we have lost our way, when temptation is too strong and evil too powerful, then we pray. We cast our care on God, we lean on his loving strength. Then we feel the presence of God in the soul within; and that is another way to come near to him.

Religious people made a great mistake when they thought that they could do without work, daily work, daily duty, when they went into convents and monasteries to give their lives to prayer. We cannot pray unless we have something outside of ourselves to pray about. We cannot pray for the sake of praying. We can only pray rightly when we go out of ourselves, and pray in order to work for God and man; and we can only work rightly when we gain strength from God with which to do all things. To "pray without ceasing" does not mean to repeat over and over again the words of prayer; but it means to live and act in the spirit of prayer, the spirit of trust and hope and love. It means to have the sense of God's presence and love around us at all times, so that we can turn to him at any moment and ask his help. It is to live in this spirit of faith, and so to be able to walk in the spirit of faithfulness.

Now, the more thoroughly we realize the presence of God, the more natural prayer becomes. A child whose father is absent or who is absent from his father writes letters to him at regular intervals, often a little stiff and formal. He goes through the usual formulas at the beginning and end of his letter, gives reasons for not having written before, apologizes for his remissness, describes his health and that of the family, mentions the events that have occurred in the neighborhood, and, not knowing exactly what else to say, stops short, half-way down the second page, professing to be in great haste, and to be obliged to finish his letter suddenly on account of the closing of the mail. Now many prayers are like these,—they are letters from a child to a distant father. They begin with formal expressions of adoration and reverence, just as children, a hundred years ago, began all their letters to their father, "Respected Sir." They return formal thanks for the gifts of life, but not for those which they really enjoy the most. They do not usually thank God when they have had a delightful conversation, when they have read an interesting book, when they have become acquainted with a good, great man, when they have heard of a noble action, when they have been enabled to do a good action themselves. We do not usually thank God for these things,—for friendship, love, the coming of summer days or a beautiful snow-storm in winter, for those best things which are nearest to us, and lie close about our feet. Our prayers are so formal that real life does not often get into them. But Christianity is introducing the prayer of faith and love, which is like the child's talk to his father and mother when he is with them, when he tells them every little thing in his little heart, when he runs up to his mother and kisses her with no particular reason for doing it, when he finds enough to say to her, and prattles all the morning of his play-room politics and the great affairs between him and his playfellows. And his mother listens, well pleased, to all this garrulity, and likes it, I think, much better than the formal letter written from a sense of duty, which contains everything but that for which he really cares. So I think God is not so well pleased with our stiff prayers, in which we give him formal thanks and formal reverence, as when we come to feel his presence near us all day, and talk to him in our hearts of what we feel and think and do, trusting him, and going to him, as the child trusts its mother's love.

This is the prayer which Christianity has introduced into the world—the prayer of truth and reality. Because spiritual, it is also true,—true to human needs and wants. In some religions only the priests offer prayers, but in Christianity all are priests. We sometimes suppose that only good people ought to pray, that God only hears the good and pious Christian But does not the good mother wish to have all her children come to her, when they are bad as well as when they are good? Does not the good and wise father seek to keep the confidence of all his children and have them confide to him their follies,

mistakes, and wrong-doings? And is God less wise and good than we? He wishes, and Christianity teaches, that above all other things he wishes to have the sinner come to him and trust in him, and, of the two, he would rather hear the sinner's prayer than that of the saint. He wishes men "to pray everywhere,"—not at church only, not only when they are good, but everywhere. He bends from heaven, and listens for the first faint whisper of penitence,—the first stammered prayer of the negro slave, of the Hindu pariah, of the outcast daughter of sin in the freezing streets of some roaring Babylon. As the mother comes and bends by night over her sick and sleeping child, all unconscious of her presence, so the Lord comes and looks on us with tenderest pity when we think nothing of him. Yet sometimes the sick and sleeping child may half arouse itself, and stretch up its little drowsy arm to its mother, and put it around her neck, drawing her face close down to his, and giving her a little sleepy kiss; and the mother is well pleased. So I think that God is well pleased when we, half awakening from our drowsy sleep in sense and sin, just look up a little moment, and cry out of our heart, though it may be only a single cry of longing or one unuttered whisper of vague hope.

It often may happen that the incoherent and troubled prayer of those low down in life may have more reality about it than that of the learned pulpit, which flows glibly from lips so accustomed to pray that it has become a piece of routine. I used to hear, in former days, negro prayers which often had this profound sincerity about them, so that they brought tears and smiles together while we listened to them. Thus I remember that an old negro prayed in 1862, at a freedmen's meeting in Washington: "O Lord, bress de Union Army: be thou their bulwarks and ditches. O Lord, as thou didst hear our prayer when we were down in de Souf country, as we held de plough and de hoe in de hot sun, so hear our prayer now for de Union army. Guard 'em on de right and de leff and in de rear: don't leave 'em alone."

And do you remember the story which Miss Botume told us of her old colored friend, who had just succeeded in building a little cabin to shelter his family, when it was burned down? All he said, as he looked on the ruin of his hopes, was, "If it is Him will, it ought to be my pleasure; and it shall be." I am sure some of you will remember that, for I recollect that you immediately sent down enough to build another and better house than the one which was burned. So that simple prayer of patient submission to the divine will was answered through you. God sent you to answer Smart Washington, just as he sent Ananias to answer Paul.

Fortunate, thrice fortunate, are those who can believe in this infinite presence of perfect love, around them, above them, and within their very soul. Blessed, thrice blessed, are those who have learned by experience that there is always an answer to every sincere prayer,—an answer which comes, by some divine law, not necessarily in outward events, but in inward strength, knowledge, and peace. Blessed are those to whom this vast universe is not a dreary desert, but the house of a heavenly Father, in which are many mansions, suitable to all the needs of all his children. Blessed are those who, while they believe in universal, unchanging law, see in this majestic order of nature an endless adaptation to the wants of all, and whose hearts tend upward to God by a steady outflow of trust, hope, and love. This is the prayer of faith, which is never without an answer.

When one who has all his life prayed only the prayer of form, at last opens his real soul to God, the spirits in heaven may say to each other with joy, "Behold, he prayeth!" When the worldly man, hardened in outward routine, is moved by some deep experience to pray, there may be joy in the presence of the angels of God. When the good man who has tried hard to do his duty, but only in his own strength, feels the need of some higher help, it may add something even to the joy of heaven. And this prayer may be answered, as Paul's prayer was answered. The Lord answered Paul's prayer by sending Ananias to him, to comfort and teach him. Some blessed human sympathy may be the answer which God sends to our prayer, some kindly human love, some unexpected word of human counsel. When we are moved, we know not why, to say a word of encouragement or do some good action, perhaps the Lord is making us his mediator to answer the secret prayer of one of our human brethren. Let us, then, not resist such influences, but go, as Ananias went to Paul, and say, "Brother, the Lord

has sent me to thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight." Or, if we do not say this, which in our case might seem a little presumptuous, let us be willing to be led by the spirit of God, to become his agents for good in the world.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

"OH, REST IN THE LORD."

[Suggested by hearing Mendelssohn's "Oh, rest in the Lord," sung at the Strangeways Unitarian Chapel, Manchester.]

Rest in the Lord and wait, O restless heart,
For his revealing will. If 'neath the load
Of burdened care thou faint upon the road,
He will not fail to see, and strength impart.
Wait patiently for him. Though sorrow's night
Be dark and long, the morning will not fail.
When o'er the eastern hills thine eyes shall hail
The sun of joy returning in its might,
Rest peacefully in him. Thy heart's desire
Is in his gift, which he will but withhold
Till, from its dross refined, the perfect gold,
Fit for his imprint, leave the searching fire.
Rest in the Lord. To his all-gracious will
Intrust thy heart's desire. Rest, and be still.

—*H. M. Davies.*

Christ seems to delight to lavish his deepest sympathy on "him that has no helper." Comfortless ones, be comforted! He often makes you portionless here, to drive you to himself, the everlasting portion. He often dries every drill and fountain of earthly bliss, that he may lead you to say, "All my springs are in thee!" He seems intent to fill up every gap love has been forced to make. How beautifully, in one amazing verse, does he conjoin the depth and tenderness of his comfort with the certainty of it,—"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you, and he shall be comforted"!

—"*Between the Lights.*"

God commandeth thee to ask, and teacheth thee how to ask, and promiseth that which thou askest; and yet askest thou not?

—*Andrews.*

Therefore let your grief be such that your consolation shall be more; for ye have not lost them, but sent them before you, that they may be kept forever blessed.

We must learn that our best and most steadfast friends are invisible; namely, the dear angels, who with faithfulness and love, moreover with all helpfulness and true friendship, far surpass all the friends we have that we can see. Thus in many ways we enjoy the fellowship of the heavenly spirits.—*Luther.*

Christ, as your friend, sympathizes with you at all times, and in all the moral conditions of your nature. Do not think that he sympathizes with you, and loves you, when in your best moods only; for, if you should, you would wrong him bitterly. A bird is no more surely noted by the Father of all, when, glancing upward through the morning light, he pours his liquid notes upon the fragrant air, than when, stricken by cruelty or evil chance, he lies fluttering, a bunch of ruffled and bloody plumage, upon the dewy lawn. And so it is with us. Our souls are not known and noted of God the most, when, light and tuneful, they are lifted in ecstasy upward; but equally watched, and as tenderly loved, are we, when stricken in hope and soiled in spirit, we lie groaning and stunned, our purposes broken, our virtue stained, our future dark and forbidding.—*Andrew Murray.*

"*Lord, increase our faith!*"—LUKE xvii. 5.

There is many a crisis in life, when we need a faith like the martyr's to support us. There are hours in life like martyrdom,—as full of bitter anguish, as full of utter earthly desolation, in which life itself loses its value and we ask to die, in whose dread struggle and agony life might drop from us and not be minded. Oh, then, must our cry, like that of Jesus, go up to the pitying heavens for help, and nothing but the infinite and the immortal can help us. Then, when the world is sinking beneath us, must we seek the everlasting arms to bear us up,—to bear us up to heaven. Thus it was with our great example, and so must it be with us. "In him was life,"—the life of self-renunciation, the life of love, the life of spiritual and all-conquering faith; and that life is the light of men. O blessed light! come to our darkness; for our soul is dark, our way is dark for want of thee. Come to our darkness and turn it into day; and let it shine brighter and brighter, till it mingles with the light of the all-perfect and everlasting day!—"*Between the Lights.*"

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated*, all books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.?

The following books are offered by the Second Church Branch, Salem. Address Miss Decker, 7 Mt. Vernon Street, Salem, Mass.: "Primary Language Lessons," Sheldon, Metcalf and Bright's "Language Lessons"; "Elements of Grammar and Composition"; "Practical Lessons in Use of English"; Appleton's "Second Reader"; Franklin's "Second Reader"; "Second Book in Reading and Spelling," Worcester; Worcester's "Speller"; Monroe's "Practical Speller"; "Teacher's Manual for Lessons in Language," Tarbell "Teacher's Manual for Teachers using Arithmetic by Grades," Prince; "Arithmetic by Grades," J. T. Prince, Books 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; "The Werner Arithmetic"; "Arithmetic," Nichols, Books 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; "Mathematics for Common Schools"; "Higher Arithmetic," Walsh, Franklin "Primary Arithmetic"; Franklin "Elementary Arithmetic", Franklin "Written Arithmetic"; "Mental Arithmetic," Wentworth; "Beginning of Christianity," E. A. Horton; *Le Francais*, French periodical; *Munsey*, 1902; "Music," vocal and instrumental.

Mrs. Farley Rikert, Clinton Corners, N.Y., offers the following books: "School History of the United States," J. B. McMaster; "United States History," J. J. Anderson; "A Gentleman Juror," C. H. Marsh; "Beautiful Joe," Marshall Saunders; Eaton's "Elementary Algebra"; Werner's "Mental Arithmetic."

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send requests for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1 Will some kind friend send me the *Youth's Companion* or any books by Louisa Alcott or Rosa Carey. I will pass on any reading received. Clara Winter, R.R., Waterville, Minnesota.

2. I am very fond of reading; and, as I am not able to buy, I would be very glad to receive some good book or magazines. Mrs. Jas. K. Dickinson, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

3. I enjoy *The Cheerful Letter* so much, and look eagerly forward to its coming each month. I would be glad to receive good reading,—magazines or letters. Mrs. Lelion B. Dotson, Danbury, North Carolina.

4. I wish to thank you for the nice reading I have received, and come again asking to be remembered in the future. I would be glad to receive two spelling-books for my little boys, and the "English Orphans" or "Tempest and Sunshine" or any of Mary J. Holmes's works or any other reading for myself. Mrs. M. H. Coleman, Dobyn, Patrick County, Virginia.

5. I am a farmer's wife and have two children, one little girl six years old, boy four years old. We are poor people, not able to buy books. It is from three to six miles to any schools. I would like to correspond with some one of the good Cheerful Letter members, and would also be glad to have any reading. Mrs. Ella Welch, Glenzaida, Alabama.

6. *My dear Cheerful Letter Friends,*—I want to thank some of you for a bunch of magazines and papers I received a week or two ago There was no name to tell me to whom I am indebted for the treat My nephew will stay with us and go to school this winter. May I ask for "Stepping Stones of Literature" and any recitation for a child of twelve for him? We are very thankful for any good reading, as we are not able to buy, and very few of our neighbors are. So whatever we get passes around. Myrtle A. Ford, Danville, Montgomery County, Missouri.

7. I am a cripple, fifty-three years old, and have not been able to walk without crutches since I was two years old I would be glad to get any books and magazines, anything that any of the friends may see fit to send to me. I can sew and knit, but love so much to read. Miss Mary A. McLeod R. F. D., No. 2, Lenoir, North Carolina.

8. Mrs. Bell Jordan, Vanndale, Arkansas, asks for Andersen's "Fairy Tales," "Goody Two-shoes," "Henrietta's Wish," and "A Short History of the English People" [probably Green's "Short History," etc.].

9. I come to the dear *Cheerful Letter* to thank one and all of you, dear friends, who have been so kind as to send me good reading, which I enjoy very much, and then pass it on. I also ask some kind friend to send me a dictionary, for my grandson. Mrs. Nancy Ashworth, Osage, Virginia.

10. Mrs. Sallie Clark, Pisgah, Alabama, asks for Holmes's "First Reader."

11. I thank those who have sent me reading matter in the past, as it was greatly appreciated, and I would accept it as a great favor if some one would send me the *Ladies' Home Journal;* "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow," by Jerome K. Jerome; or any reading matter. (Miss) Clara Greer, Blackstone, North Carolina.

12. *Dear Cheerful Letter,*—Month after month rolls by without response from this little branch of your great work. Days go by and months go by without a word or sign, yet still I *feel* in full reply, "My spirit answers thine." My library started here by the Framingham Alliance has grown, by contribution, to be very serviceable. My time is taken almost wholly by the books and work attendant. Through them I meet "all sorts and conditions of men," and, like that good book, I strive to unite and harmonize them. Our little library is a popular centre of good will and cheer. While adding my mite to the betterment of the town's life, I am hungry for greeting from those of our own broad faith. Among the tourists and health-seekers, I move with a desire so fervent, it seems, if there were Unitarians present, they would be forced by the spirit to respond and seek me out. To the many sisters to whom I am indebted in the past and to-day, I beg to be remembered. I have not got a post-office now or time and strength as I had in my country home. I hope they will understand why I cannot write as often as my grateful heart prompts. A friend has given to the library "Lovey Mary." I want more of the same nature,—anything enlightening the sociological unrest of our time. A good book is my greatest joy, for I can divide it and still have it. I am here devoted to your work of uplifting, cheering, enlightening, as far as in me lies. Sister Mary E. Wicker.

Mrs. W. H. Martin writes us of the death of her aunt, Miss Susan J. Bishop, of Stuart, Virginia, who died July 5. The kindness which she had received from our members gave her great pleasure.

The address of Mrs. Lou Merrick is changed from West Derry, New Hampshire, to 14 Eighth Avenue, Haverhill, Mass.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

JUNO'S SCHOOL.

(Continued.)

In order to recover the attention of her class, Juno determined not to go on any farther with her writing lesson, but told the children that, if they would all sit down and sit still, she would read them a story. So she opened her little Bible at a place where she had put in a mark, which was at the story of David and Goliath.

She proceeded quite slowly, making explanations as she went on, and pausing a moment now and then, in order to allow any of the class to ask questions who might be so disposed. The children sometimes gazed at her as she read with an expression of wonder in their faces, and sometimes stared about the room as if bewildered with the novelty of their situation. Then they looked toward the window, as if expecting to see Pompling come back in the same manner that he went away.

Juno, however, went patiently on, read and explained her story, and, as the excitement among the children gradually subsided, she began to feel quite encouraged. At length, seeing that Tommy was looking very earnestly toward her, as if deeply interested in something that was passing in his mind, doubtless, as she supposed, about the story, she paused a moment, thinking that perhaps he might wish to ask some question.

"I went a-fishing yesterday, I did," said Tommy.

"Did you?" said Juno.

"Yes," said Tommy, "but I did not catch any fishes. The fishes would not get on."

"It's a-cause ye did not put worms on your pin," said Trip.

"Very well," said Juno. "Never mind about that now. We must not talk about going a-fishing while we are in our Sunday-school. You must listen to the story that I am reading to you."

So she went on reading and explaining, and doing all she could to interest the children in the details of the narrative. At length, just as she was coming to the crisis of the story, Trip, who was the youngest boy in the class, and was a very fat, sturdy-looking fellow, whose ruddy cheeks and stolid-looking countenance made him look the very picture of dogged resolution, slipped down from his seat, walked deliberately toward the corner where the caps were lying, seized his own cap, put it on his head, and, before Juno had time to recover her thoughts, he walked off toward the door, saying aloud, and very distinctly, but in a tone as if he were talking to himself,—

"I am going home now."

On seeing and hearing this, Sally, who had been for some time becoming very restless, got down from her seat, and walked along, swinging her bonnet over her finger by one of the strings, saying:—

"And I, too. I'm tired."

Juno in vain attempted to stop these deserters, and to persuade them to stay. They pushed by, and went downstairs, leaving Tommy and Rosalie with Juno alone.

Tommy looked for a moment quite bewildered. He gazed first at Juno, then at the door where Trip and Sally had gone out, and then at Rosalie, who, like a good girl, had kept her seat quietly all the time. He seemed for a moment at a loss to know what to do. At length the resolution which he came to was indicated by his saying aloud to Rosalie,—

"We won't run away from the school, will we, Rosalie?"

"No," said Rosalie.

Juno was for a moment greatly distressed at finding herself deserted by almost the whole of her class. She was somewhat comforted to find that Tommy and Rosalie remained, and the relief which was thus afforded her was greatly increased by knowing that their remaining was not the result of accident or of mere indecision on their part, but proceeded from a distinct determination not to follow the bad example which the others had set them.

Still, she was very much troubled and distressed, and for a few moments she did not know what to do. She looked restless and undecided, and was really quite perplexed. Her indecision was, however, soon terminated by a call from her two remaining scholars.

"Read us the rest of the story, please," said Rosalie.

"Yes," said Tommy, "read us the rest of the story."

"Ah! yes," said Juno, "I will. And you are very good children to ask me for it. I

won't be discouraged as long as I have two such good scholars as you for my class."

So Juno resumed the reading and explaining of the story; but she felt so much disappointed and so chagrined at the breaking up of her class that she had not much heart for continuing her work. Out of a class of seven, only two were left; and she did not know what freak or caprice might seize them next, and leave her entirely alone.

She, however, went on with the story until she had finished it, and then she closed the school, and dismissed the two scholars that remained. She told them that they had been very good scholars, and she made two good marks after their names in the class paper. She said that she should have some rewards next Sunday, and should give all the scholars that had good marks a reward.

"And now," said Tommy, "you must make a bad mark for Pompling, because he got out of the window, and went off before the school was half done."

"Poor Pompling!" said Juno. "I am sorry he went away. I'll see about giving him a bad mark by and by."

"And the others ought to have bad marks, too," said Tommy.

"We'll see," said Juno.

So saying, she folded up her class paper and put it away; and then, after putting on her bonnet, she left the school-room with Tommy and Rosalie, and walked with them along the path which led toward home.

When Juno reached home, she went up into her room, and for a time she felt greatly oppressed with a feeling of discouragement and despondency.

"I thought I could manage a class of such children as these," said she, "but I cannot; and I don't know what I shall do."

In a word, Juno's dark hour had come.

—*Jacob Abbott.*

(*To be continued.*)

The universal reign of love, creating new economics, a new commerce, new politics, a new social life, supplanting greed of gain with passion for service, and mutual competition with mutual helpfulness, unreal as it seems to us, immersed in the struggle and held by the habits and ruled by the ideas of to-day, is yet the destined result and fulfilment of the centuries and ages of divine teaching.—*Philip Moxom.*

NATURAL HISTORY.

A DAY WITH THE SUNDEWS.

Vasculums and spud in hand, we made for the moor, a paradise for the sundews, a paradise for heather and the cotton sedge, grass of Parnassus, butterwort, and the delicate little bog pimpernel. All of these were in perfection, and the music that sang their lullaby was the wild note of the curlew and the divine song of the lark above the fields close by.

What we discovered let me tell you in a few words. It was the sundew family we were after, and their green and scarlet rosettes of leaves were plainly visible lying on the verdant moss. In each one the flower-stalk rose from the centre, an inch or two in height, bearing its crown of white blossoms. It was not with the flower, however, we had to do, but the leaves, which spread out on every side, and glittering in the sunshine, laid deadly traps for every unwary insect that fluttered near.

Our vasculums were soon nearly full of the beautiful plants, as we meant to grow them at home and make experiments on the feeding of them, as Darwin did, till he discovered that his sundews, fed on tiny shreds of raw meat, throve as well as, if not better than, their brethren of the moor.

The sundews, like most insect-eating plants, possess weakly developed roots: therefore, to make up for the scant supply of nitrogenous food they receive by the root source, their leaves are modified into actual weapons of destruction, that they may keep themselves from starvation and catch food on their own account.

What is found on the leaf, then, that can explain such a wonderful power?

By the use of the microscope it is found that every leaf is thickly covered with hairs,—say two hundred on a full-sized leaf; next, that each hair ends in an oval-shaped, glandular knob. These hairs are scientifically called tentacles, and certainly they are as deadly in their embrace as the tentacles of the sea-anemone.

The next thing is quite discernible by the naked eye, and that is that both tentacles and knobs are continually bathed in a viscid fluid. This secured the pretty name of sundew for the plant, as it sparkles in the sunshine like dew. Each glandular knob is

composed of two cells, filled with a purple fluid. The tentacles in the centre of the leaf are short and erect, while toward the margin they are much longer and lie out like a fringe all round the outside of the leaf.

If an insect alights on the tentacles in the centre of the leaf, all the surrounding ones begin immediately to move and inflect themselves over it, the ones nearest the centre beginning first, and so on to the margin, till every one is busy. The insect meanwhile is fairly caught by the viscid fluid, and its struggles to escape only help to involve it more deeply, as, to excite the inflection of the tentacles over it to smother it, the insect must come into contact, not only with the fluid, but with the glandular knob itself.

This is accomplished, then, by the insect absorbing the fluid around its body, and then falling onto the glands, which all unite in killing it. The sundew belongs to the class of insect-eating plants that digest their prey.

As soon as a leaf entraps a living creature, these digestive properties come into operation at once, for the fluid in the glands immediately becomes quite acid, and their two cells now, instead of being merely filled with a purple fluid, are seen to contain masses of purple matter hanging in a colorless fluid.

This is the true digestive agent and resembles the gastric juices of the higher animals. The oval-shaped glands pour it out copiously on the dead insect to digest it for the plant.

This seems a wonderful story of such a lovely and innocent-looking little plant as the sundew, but in the world of nature the food supply of all living things is the greatest factor in life, so the pretty little sundew lives by continually spreading out his nets and traps. —*Selected.*

When God sends darkness, let it be dark. 'Tis so vain to think we can light it up with candles, or make it anything but dark. It may be because of the darkness we shall see some new beauty in the stars.—*The Story of William and Lucy Smith.*

The Lacedæmonians, at their public spectacles, used to set seats in the shade for strangers, but themselves sat down anywhere.—*M. Aurelius Antoninus.*

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

I.

Progressive Numerical Enigma.

1. He looked at his 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, without a 6, 7, 8, 9, and then turned back without giving the sentinel the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

2. The men who do not take active part in the 1, 2, 3, should not 4, 5, 6, 7, about defeats until their actions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, success.

3. It is a commendable 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, in a boy 6, 7, girl to 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

4. In this kind one can 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, his thoughts 6, 7, 8, 9, frequently, but he should not push his liberty to the 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

II.

Charade.

In double form my first is famed
In fable and in history,—
Great, good, and true, small, shy, and false.
Solve, if you can, this mystery.

My second figures in romance,
In ballad, and in story;
Has lain above the lover's heart,
And grasped the sword of glory.

"Far from the madd'ning crowd," my whole
Exists for beauty only:
It shuns the city's crowded ways,
And springs in hamlets lonely

(*St. Nicholas.*)

III.

Transpositions.

When the right word is set in one of the blanks in each sentence, the letters of that word may be transported to fill each of the remaining blanks.

1. The —— wore a dark brown —— and his wife had on a dress which for —— and —— might have vied with a princess's robe.

2. On account of a dispute which arose every —— was obliged to —— his place; and at present peace —— in the choir.

3. In crossing a field, Charles saw an —— near an old stone wall, but, having a great —— of such venomous creatures, he —— not go near enough to kill it.

4. —— has a —— crow, and is anxious to get a —— for it, that she may harness them in a —— and teach them tricks.

5. A terrific —— of thunder sounded through the court-room, the lawyer stopped short in his ——, the accused turned ——, and there were few present whose hearts did not —— with sudden fear.

(*St. Nicholas*)

IV.

Tommy was eating my first when his sister, whose name was my second, called him and sent him to a neighbor's to borrow my whole, which she used to season her apple-pie.

V.

Concealed Characters from Shakespeare.

1. He has little artistic ability, but he works hard.

2. Mabel, there's an ant on your skirt. Let me brush it off.

3. The rain fell like a benediction on the fevered earth.

4. Shall we row farther up the river or land on this little island and fish awhile?

5. This yellow slab covered the grave of an abbot, Tom says, whose ghost haunts the spot every night.

6. The child's face was puckered up, ready for crying, when he suddenly spied the new toy-cart and laughed aloud.

Answers to Puzzles in August Number.

I.

Longfellow.

II.

1. Iron.
2. Lead.
3. Tin.
4. Gold.
5. Silver.

III.

1. *Pa*-trio-*t*.
2. *W*-hit-*e*.
3. *Sin*-kin-*g*.
4. *De*-sir-*ed*.
5. *La*-din-*g*.

IV.

The vowels.

V.

Scales.

The more we give to others, the more are we increased.—*Lao-Tze.*

THE MORALS OF THE BATH-TUB.

The Dutch are the cleanliest people in the world; and the latest published statistics show that Holland, in proportion to its population, is the most moral nation on the globe. It is very easy to find a direct connection between the cleanliness of a people and their moral standard. Of all the external aids to a moral life none is so potent as tidiness. An untidy man or woman soon becomes a moral sloven. Let a man be careless of his surroundings, of his companionships, of his dress, his general appearance, and of his bodily habits, and it is not long before the same carelessness extends into the realm of his morals. We are creatures of our surroundings, and we work and act as we feel. If a man lives in a home where carelessness or untidiness in his dress is overlooked, he very soon goes from one inexactitude to another. He very quickly loses himself. The moral fibre of a man, fine of itself, can soon become coarse if the influence of his external surroundings is coarse. I believe thoroughly in the effect of a man's dress and habits of person upon his moral character. I do not say that neatness of appearance and cleanliness of person constitute the gentleman or the man of honor. But I do say that they are potent helps. And I would like to emphasize the importance of this belief upon the women of our homes. For it is given them to be an important factor in these helps to the betterment of the world's morality.—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

There are few temptations more common to ardent spirits than that which leads them to repine at the lot in which they are cast, believing that in some other situation they could serve God better. If each such man had the spirit of self-surrender, the spirit of the cross, it would not matter to him whether he were doing the work of the mainspring or one of the inferior parts. It is his duty to try and be himself, simply to try to do his own duty.—*F. W. Robertson.*

Elegance of manner is the outgrowth of refined and exalted sense.—*Chesterfield.*

Those who differ most from the opinions of their fellow-men are the most confident of the truth of their own.—*Mackintosh.*

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged — not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort — by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

4. An important part of our mission is to mothers of young families, who feel the importance of their sacred charge and are anxious to learn all that can be known to make of their children good, upright, useful men and women,— good citizens of the country,— for which we must all work together if we would make it fulfil its mission among the nations of the world and to the races of mankind. We give books on subjects connected with the training of children, and our columns are open (in our "Mothers' Council") to all who have questions to ask or interesting suggestions to make on topics important to mothers.

TRAVELLING LIBRARIES.

The Travelling Libraries have now become an important part of Cheerful Letter work. In order that this department may be thoroughly organized and systematized, Miss Louise Brown, Box 91, South Framingham, Mass., has kindly consented to take it in charge. Will those interested in these libraries, and desiring information, kindly address Miss Brown as above?

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

It would assist us very much if those who give books would send word regularly to our Book Club secretary what books they have given and to whom.

Sometimes an appeal is made in our Book Club, which receives a large response, fifteen or twenty people sending books to the writer. Yet she stands on our record as having received nothing, and others who propose to send to her are encouraged to do so.

The next person on our list may really have received nothing as yet. The only way to equalize the distribution of books is to keep an approximate record of all that are sent. May we hope to secure for this end the co-operation of the Branches?

Checks should be made payable to Mary Louise Catlin.

It is contrary to the rules of the Cheerful Letter Exchange to allow any one to make use of our paper by addressing letters, asking for money, clothing, or other articles, to those whose names are printed in the paper. This prohibition includes requests to borrow money and the offering of articles for sale. The name of any person who infringes this rule will be dropped from our list; and any one who receives a request of this description is desired by our Executive Committee to return no answer, but to enclose the letter at once to our secretary, Miss Langmaid.

DIRECTIONS.

EDITOR,— Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,— Miss Bertha Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.

SECRETARY OF BOOK CLUB OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,— Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,— Mrs. Charles T. Catlin, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Subscriptions and renewals should be sent to the treasurer, also all changes of address and requests for discontinuance. The subscription is fifty cents a year. If subscribers do not receive the paper regularly, they are requested to notify Mrs. Catlin at once.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Mrs. Catlin, as above. Please give full name and address. Also send name of minister as reference. Some of our members take the paper in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.